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the French themselves, and for this reason we are inclined to think that Kinglake's will, as a history, supersede Victor Hugo's. As a story, the "*Histoire d'un Crime*" will bear comparison with the author's other works in narrative power, while it has besides the advantage of being true.

9.—*The House Beautiful. Essays on Beds and Tables, Stools and Candlesticks.* By CLARENCE COOK. New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co. 1878. 8vo, pp. 336.

A YEAR or two since the English press, and, if we remember right, our own to a slight extent as well, undertook an investigation of the mysterious relations existing between the manufacturers of pianos and the noble army of pianists. The result of the inquiry seemed to establish the fact that piano-manufacturers had succeeded, by means of the control of concert-halls, and by combinations with managers, in reducing the pianist to a condition not far removed from slavery. He is, it appears, not allowed to play on any instrument he pleases, but is bound to use the pianos of the particular maker who has established his sway over the territory the artist selects for his professional tour. If he is not inclined to use this instrument, he finds it impossible to effect an engagement; and thus the artist, longing to "interpret" his favorite composer—it may even be himself—is forced to pound out the praises of the well-known manufacturer Smith or Jones. At some concerts we have seen Smith's name conspicuously displayed on a placard hanging on the instrument, giving Smith for the time being far more fame than was allowed to Beethoven, Schumann, or Schubert. It was pointed out, at the time these disclosures were made, that the practice of enslaving pianists, and making them advertising agents, was cruel and corrupt, that it had a tendency to debase art, and was an imposition on the public.

We fear very much that Mr. Cook's book will expose him in some quarters to the charge of trying to establish a relation between authors and venders of domestic furniture, similar to that said to exist between pianists and piano-makers. He has in "*The House Beautiful*" attempted, as he says, to persuade people to abandon fashion, and pursue the paths of true art and taste in furnishing their houses. In this he is doing his duty as an artist and a citizen; and if he could induce New-Yorkers to carry out this reform, not merely singly, but by whole blocks and streets, he would be entitled to much public grati-

tude. But, in his zeal he has, unfortunately, it seems to us, refused to confine himself to general criticism of existing fashions, and to general indications of correct principles of construction and decoration in furniture, and insists on telling us to what stores we should go to purchase the things of the sort he describes, and incidentally indulges in a good deal of praise of all the persons (except himself) concerned in getting up the book which contains the information he is kind enough to give. We are told (p. 16) that the excellence of its woodcuts is due "to the long experience and to the patient skill of Mr. A. W. Drake;" that the good luck of having Mr. Drake's services is due to the excellent management of *Scribner's Monthly*; that the book "must long be dear to the lovers of art," because it contains "the drawing of Francis Lathrop and the engraving of Henry Marsh;" and (p. 17) that the "cover of the book" is due to Mr. Daniel Cottier; while there is also a complimentary notice of his firm, and of Mr. James S. Inglis, its representative here. On page 54 we learn that we had better buy our carpets of the houses of Morris & Co. and Cottier & Co.; that "William Pollock, carpet-manufacturer, 937 Market Street, Philadelphia, second door below Tenth Street," also turns out a carpet that it is well to have; (p. 33) that Venetian chairs of the "finer kinds" are to be found at "such shops as those of "Sypher or Mr. Hawkins." We have not counted the number of recommendations like these scattered through the book, but they are sufficiently numerous to furnish to an enemy of earnestness and truth in furniture, to one of the ungodly, in short, ground for a charge that the work, while ostensibly designed to further art and taste, is really nothing more nor less than an elaborate puff of "William Pollock, carpet-manufacturer, 937 Market Street, Philadelphia," and the other persons who are mentioned with such favor. We fear that this criticism may suggest itself to captious critics, and therefore we take this opportunity of saying that no one who knows Mr. Cook's reputation would for a moment think him capable of lending himself to such an attempt, and that his energetic praises of the persons referred to merely come from a genuine desire to make their merits known. It is a sad thought that the world is so full of deception and corruption that explanations of this sort are necessary, and it is a proof of Mr. Cook's childlike simplicity that this possible criticism should apparently never even have occurred to him.

With regard to the book we may now say, without violating the reader's sense of propriety, that it is the handsomest of the season;

that it contains many pleasing cuts, and that most of its suggestions are valuable; that those who follow them will find their lives rendered brighter and happier, though perhaps not cheaper, by doing so; while those who persist in their present course, and go on buying the wrong kind of candlesticks or beds or tables or stools, will live all their lives and finally die in disgusting darkness and ignorance: and we may add that, by the laws governing the inheritance of personal property, their sins will be visited upon their next of kin to the third and fourth generation.

10.—*The Book of Gold, and Other Poems.* By JOHN TOWNSEND TROWBRIDGE. With Illustrations. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1878. Pp. 81.

THIS collection of verse consists of five poems, three having a moral tendency—one being apparently intended for a satire on social shams and vanities; and one, called “Tom’s come Home,” one of those nondescript efforts usually put down in household books of poetry either as “Poems of the Affections,” or under the head of “Miscellaneous.” Mr. Trowbridge is a very popular poet. Without knowing anything about it, we should be willing to wager that more persons have read his poems than have read those of Lowell, Tennyson, and Bryant, combined; and, if popularity be the test, he is more successful than any one of the three. The secret of his popularity is his ability to express in easy verse the common—not to say trite—morality of every-day life. “The Book of Gold,” for instance, recounts the reclamation of the gambler from the paths of vice by means of a book containing moral maxims (emphasized by being written in verse, and printed in italics). The author of this book, one Charles Masters by name, is an opium-eater, and dies in great misery, the redeemed gambler only coming in in time to receive his dying words. The moral of all this is, that we ought not to eat opium, or gamble, or, we may add, commit suicide, as the hero of the tale was just about to do when saved by “The Book of Gold.” “The Wreck of the Fishing-Boat” is a sea-side story illustrating the wickedness of boys who neglect their father’s orders with regard to fishing-boats, and thus involve maritime families in great perils. “The Ballad of Arabella” is one of those familiar pieces of satire indulged in more frequently by newspaper wags than by gnomic poets like Mr. Trowbridge, directed at the supposed habit of fashionable women of wearing enormous quantities of false hair and